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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the close relationship between motor skill and cognitive development in the first 2 years of life, this guide presents 78 developmentally appropriate activities that parents and teachers can use to enhance infant and toddler motor development. Activities are categorized by age group as follows: (1) 16 activities for newborn to 5-month-old infants (sample activities include: texture pictures, cooing together, colors and movement, people pictures, everyday singing, side to side eye movement); (2) 12 activities for 5-month to 9-month-old infants (sample activities include: peek-a-boo pictures, pulling strings, hide and seek, patting pans); (3) 13 activities for 9-month to 12-month-old infants (sample activities include: sprays of color, jack-in-the-box, reaching ribbon, sound identification); (4) 21 activities for 12-month to 18-month-old young toddlers (sample activities include: naming others, surprise board, bug jar, train pull, squeeze toys); and (5) 16 activities for older toddlers, aged 18 to 24 months (sample activities include naming game, carry on, pour and fill, block drop, ring around the animal). For each activity, the ability the child will be developing is identified and a brief description of procedures is provided. (BCY)

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The Promotion of Gross and Fine Motor Development for Infants and Toddlers: Developmentally Appropriate Activities for Parents and Teachers

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Introduction.

During the first two years of life motor and cognitive development are closely related. During infancy motor activity is the basis for much cognitive development and vice versa. The infant is in the Piagetian stage known as the sensorimotor period. The process whereby the child acquires movement patterns and skills during this sensorimotor period is called motor development. This motor development takes place through the interaction of maturation (genetic factors), the effects of previous experience, and new motor experiences. During infancy motor development focuses on voluntary control of specific motor patterns.

As children leave infancy and enter the toddler period, they are still growing physically at a rapid rate. Gross motor movements dominate activity. Toddlers repeat actions over and over, as if practicing to be able to do them perfectly. They gradually become more agile and coordinated. While the toddler spends a great deal of time working on his/her gross motor skills, fine motor skills are not neglected. During the toddler years, the child progressively refines hand and finger movements. Coordination of thumb and fingers improves and the hands are used with more precision. Small objects are manipulated with increasing dexterity. Space and movement become coordinated so objects can be reached for and picked up with smooth movements and minimal effort. Again, cognitive development is enhanced by the child's opportunities to explore objects. It is usually assumed that the more attention the child gives to this exploration the more information the child obtains.

The critical time for the development of motor skills is between eighteen and sixty months of age. Parents and teachers can enhance infants' and toddlers' motor development through directly playing with the child as well as facilitating the play through setting up the environment with specific objects and learning experiences. The activities below are designed for the following age categories: infants - newborn to 5 months; infants - 5 to 9 months; young toddlers - 12 to 18 months; and older toddlers - 18 to 24 months. However, the activities listed under each of these categories are developmentally appropriate for this age group but should not be limited to only this age group: children grow and develop at their own individual rate and what may be appropriate for one child may well be inappropriate or too limiting for another child at the same age. The reader is referred to a publication by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1986) called Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age Eight - Expanded Edition. Part 2 of this book discusses "Developmentally Appropriate Care for Children From Birth Through Age 3".

Activities for Infants (Newborn to 5 Months)

Texture Pictures

Baby Can: Look at pictures

Make a few texture pictures by drawing or cutting out big, clear pictures of animals, flowers, or faces and then adding textures to them. For example, draw a simple bunny, and paste a fluffy cotton ball tail onto it. Or, make a big happy face, and glue bright buttons on for eyes. Put the pictures where baby can see them. Make sure baby cannot reach to pull off small pieces because they

might cause choking. Talk to baby about what he/she sees.

Cooing Together

Baby Can: Make cooing sounds

Listen for baby's cooing sounds. As he/she coos, answer with the same sounds he/she is making. See if baby coos more and more when you join him/her in his/her sound game. If you have a tape recorder, tape baby's coos and play them back at naptime or when baby is fussy. It can help calm him/her down.

Sunshine

Baby Can: Look at objects

Cover some cardboard shapes with aluminum foil. Hang them from a dowel or hanger in a sunny window where they will shine in the sunlight. Place or hold baby so that he/she can watch. Open the window to let a breeze gently move the shiny shapes. Hang the mobile outside. Put baby in an infant seat or beanbag chair placed near enough to watch.

Vanilla Smells

Baby Can: Smell things

Put a little bit of vanilla extract on your hand or neck. Hold baby where he/she can be near the smell, and talk with the him/her about it. Don't try this with strong perfumes because baby may not like such strong smells. Natural flavors and smells work best with this activity.

Blankety Soft

Baby can: Feel things

Lie baby on a blanket made of big squares of different-textured fabric. Try this when baby is wearing only a diaper as well as at times when he/she is fully dressed. Use textures such as fleece; soft, fuzzy fabrics; smooth, slippery satin; nubby towels; or soft, cuddly old sweaters. Tell baby about what he/she is feeling. This is a good outdoor activity for a nice, sunny day.

Colors and Movement

Baby Can: Begin to turn head

Tie a pretty, large plastic bead or stacking ring to a colorful ribbon or piece of yarn. Hang it over changing table, and swing it gently so that baby will move her eyes and head. Move the hanging ribbon or yarn to a different side of the changing area each week.

Airplane

Baby Can: Lift head - Reach out at toys

Play airplane with baby, holding him out in front of you. Swing him gently and slowly around. Fly him through the air like an airplane, and carry him over to see interesting things at different heights.

Encourage him to lift his head or shoulders so that he can reach out to touch the things around him.

People Pictures

Baby Can: Look Around

Cut out big pictures of people's faces from magazines. Cover them with clear contact paper. Securely attach pictures to chair legs, table legs, low wall spaces, or any other open space at baby's eye level. Put him/her on his/her tummy so that he/she can see and pat the pictures. As he/she looks at the pictures, talk to him/her about what he/she sees.

Down They Go!

Baby Can: Reach out when on stomach

Place baby on his/her stomach on a rug or blanket. Stack a few small blocks within baby's reach. Let him/her knock the blocks over. Tell him/her what he/she did, and stack them again for him/her. Then let him/her hold and play with the blocks. If you use hard blocks, keep an eye on baby so that he/she doesn't bump himself/herself on them and get hurt.

Peek-a-boo, Dolly

Baby Can: Play peek-a-boo

Place baby on his/her tummy on a soft rug or blanket. Put a doll in front of him/her within his/her reach. Cover the doll with a blanket. Quickly take the blanket off the doll. If baby likes this game, do it again for a few times. Talk about what you are doing to baby.

Everyday Singing

Baby Can: Hear sounds

Sing to baby about the things you do with him/her. The tune of "Mulberry Bush" works well for this activity:

"This is the way we change your diapers,
Change your diapers, change your diapers...",

or,
"This is the way we play with toys,
Play with toys, play with toys...".
Sing songs about many kinds of things throughout the day.

Copycat

Baby Can: Hear Sounds - Look at moving things

Sit baby in an infant seat, or prop him/her up in a sturdy box with pillows. Sit in front of him/her and sing this song to the tune of "Mulberry Bush":

"This is the way we clap our hands,
Clap our hands, clap our hands,
This is the way we clap our hands,
So early in the morning."

Clap your hands for baby to watch. Move baby's hands sometimes, too. Try other variations:

"This is the way we pat our head...
"This is the way we touch our toes...
"This is the way we tap our nose...
"This is the way we kick our feet..."

Move and pat baby's hands for these variations as well.

Kicking Practice

Baby Can: Kick feet

Securely sew small, shiny bells onto the cuffs of a pair of socks or onto a small band of elastic. Slip the bells around baby's ankles, and shake his/her feet to make the bells jingle. Encourage baby to make lots of kicking motions.

Ribbon Pull

Baby Can: Reach out for things

Hang a long, brightly colored ribbon or scarf loosely around your neck. When you lean over baby to change him or pick him up, allow him to reach out and touch the ribbon or scarf. Try adding a securely tied wooden bead or any other safe, interesting object that baby might like to reach for to each end of your ribbon or scarf. Smile and talk to him about what he or she is doing.

Side to Side Eye Movement

Baby Can: Watch an object move from side to side

While baby is lying on his or her back, shake a rattle in front of him/her. After you have his/her attention, move the rattle slowly

to one side. Make sure he/she is still watching, and then slowly move it all the way back across his/her body to the other side. Move slowly enough for baby to turn his/her head and watch all the way across his/her body. Talk about what you are doing to the baby.

Texture Talk

Baby Can: Feel things

Find fabric of different textures (slippery satin, bumpy washcloths, soft cotton, thermal cloth), and gently rub them over baby's arms or legs. Talk with him/her about what he/she feels and ask questions: "How does that feel? It is bumpy, isn't it?" Do this activity slowly and gently because some babies will not be used to these new touches.

Activities for Infants (5 Months to 9 Months)

Peek-a-Boo Pictures

Baby Can: Look at pictures and play peek-a-boo

Show baby a big, bright, clear picture of an animal. Use familiar animals, such as a cat, dog, or bird. As he/she looks at the picture, cover it with a cloth. Quickly take the cloth away. Cover the picture again, and see if baby will try to move the cloth away this time. If he/she can't, don't worry. He/she will be able to do this when he/she is a bit older.

For the Birds

Baby Can: Pull to a standing position

Put a bird feeder outside a low window. Keep it filled with sunflower seeds. When birds come to feed, pick up baby and show him/her the birds. If you have a low windowsill, put baby down and see if he/she will pull up to look. If possible, put a rocking chair near the window. Then you and baby can rock and watch the birds together. Talk about what you see to bab y such as colors, shapes, sizes, etc.

Under the Covers

Baby Can: Hold bottle

Cover baby's bottle with a textured material, such as nubby washcloth, slippery stocking, or fuzzy sock. Give it to baby to hold while he/she drinks. Talk about how it feels. Use words such as **rough, soft,** and **slippery** to describe texture.

Pulling Strings

Baby can: Pull a string

Put toys of different sizes and weights on the ends of several strings. Lay one of the strings out in front of the sitting baby. Show him/her how to pull string so that the toy moves toward him/her. Give him/her the string to pull and talk to him/her about what he/she is doing. Let him/her pull another toy to feel the difference in weight.

Baby's Picture Book

Baby Can: Look at pictures

Cut out pictures, paste them onto cardboard, and cover with clear contact paper to make picture books for baby to look at. Tie or fasten three or four pictures together to make the child's own book. Talk to baby about the pictures. Make books about many different things: colors, animals, shapes, and people.

Do as I Do

Baby Can: Imitate a few movements

While baby is sitting in his/her highchair, waiting to be fed, play a little copycat game with him/her. Do simple actions in front of him/her, and try to get him/her to copy you. Try some of these:

*show a big smile
*tip your head from side to side
*clap your hands
*shake your head
*pat your head or chest
*tap on his tray with your hand or spoon
*stamp your feet

Hide and Seek

Baby Can: Turn to find missing objects

Sit with baby in a soft play area or on a blanket outside. Show him/her a favorite toy. After you have his/her attention, lay the toy down beside or behind him/her. Encourage baby to turn his/her body around and find the toy.

Sticky Ball

Baby Can: Grasp small objects

Make a small ball (two to three inches) out of masking tape, sticky side out. Stick it onto baby's hand or clothes. See if he/she will pull it off or move it from hand to hand. Make sure baby does not put the ball in his/her mouth. The glue will not hurt him/her, but tiny pieces of tape may cause choking.

Familiar Faces

Baby Can: Look at familiar pictures of people

Collect pictures of people baby knows. Cover pictures with clear paper to protect them. Hang them where baby can see and reach. Put some low on walls and bookcases, onto the back of the rocker where you sit with baby, or tied to the legs of chairs or cribs. Place baby close to a picture where he/she can see it well. Talk to baby about what he/she sees.

First Dress-Ups

Baby Can: Enjoy looking in a mirror

Put an unbreakable mirror low enough so that baby can see himself/herself when he/she sits on the floor. Have two or three hats nearby so that you can put them on baby while he/she looks at his/her reflection. Make sure the hats are not too heavy, and be sure to just put them on baby for a few seconds. Talk about this activity with baby.

Singing About Toys

Baby Can: Hear Sounds and pick up small toys

While baby is sitting in his/her highchair, waiting to be fed, give him/her one or two small toys to play with. When he/she picks one up, sing this little song to the tune of "London Bridge":

"Baby has a little block, little block, little block,
"Baby has a little block
"In his hand."

Change this song around for different toys. Or, use the names of foods that baby is eating.

Patting Pans

Baby Can: Sit and Move arms

Bring out some old pots and pans or something that will make a good noise when baby beats on it. Put on an active record, and sing a happy song. Pat baby's pan to the beat of the music. Encourage baby to pat along with you.

Activities for Infants (9 Months to 12 Months)

Feely Boxes

Baby Can: Explore objects with fingers and hands

Glue textured fabrics to the inside of small boxes (tissue boxes,

shoe boxes). Cut a hole big enough for baby's hand to fit in one end of the box. Give the box to baby so that he/she can explore how the inside of the box feels.

Sprays of Color

Baby Can: Imitate a few actions

Securely tape a large piece of newsprint onto a low wall space. Fill a spray bottle with water that is deeply colored with nontoxic food coloring. Spray the paper while baby watches. Give baby a two-inch piece of sponge, and help him/her pat the paper as the water drips.

Old MacDonald

Baby Can: Make a few animal sounds

Find several stuffed animals that are familiar to baby and sing "Old MacDonald." When you get to the animal's name or sound, hold up the stuffed toy and see if baby will sing the name or make the sound with you. Start out with only one or two animals at first, and then add more later.

This is the Way We Shake a Rattle

Baby Can: Imitate what you do

Gather a few musical instruments - one set for you and one for baby (two rattles, two drums, two bells, and two clacking rattles). To the tune of "Mulberry Bush", sing the following:

"This is the way we shake the rattle,
"Shake the rattle,
"Shake the rattle...."
etc.

As you sing, shake the rattle and help baby shake his/her rattle, too. Then repeat with another instrument. Help baby copy you.

Jack-in-the-Box

Baby Can: Sit and imitate simple arm movements

Sit baby on a blanket outside. Sit down in front of him/her with a jack-in-the-box in your lap. Wind the jack-in-the-box so that the music plays for baby. Then when Jack pops out, throw both of your hands high in the air and say, "Pop!" Encourage baby to copy all your actions and move along with the music.

Hide and Seek

Baby Can: Lift the lid off a shoe box

Put an empty shoe box in front of baby. While he/she watches, hide a favorite toy in the box and close the lid. Help baby lift the lid and find the toy by himself/herself. After baby can do this activity, add an extra box of a different color or don't let baby see where you put the toy.

Reaching Ribbons

Baby Can: Pull to a standing position

Sit in a chair in front of baby. Tie long colorful ribbons around your knees, and shake them in front of baby. Encourage baby to pull up to a standing position as he/she reaches up to play with the ribbons.

A String of Toys

Baby Can: Crawl after moving objects

Tie an interesting toy to the end of a string. Gently pull the string in front of baby, and encourage him/her to crawl after it. Let baby catch and play with the toy every minute or so, or he/she will get frustrated very quickly and lose interest.

Drop-in Boxes

Baby Can: Drop objects into a container

Make simple drop-in boxes for baby out of old shoe boxes. Cut a hole in the top or side of a box for baby to poke things through. Then give him/her small toys to drop in his/her box such as blocks, toy cars, balls, or other small toys.

Sound Identification

Baby Can: Listen to special sounds

Help baby listen to and identify everyday sounds he/she hears (the telephone ringing, someone knocking at the door, and running water). When you hear a sound, talk about it with baby.

Sound Search

Baby Can: Turn to find sounds

Put three different sound-making toys (bells, spoons, drum, rattle, etc.) in three different areas of the room or on the corners of a big blanket. While baby is crawling on the floor, make one of the sounds for him/her to hear, find, or crawl to. Move to another part of the room and make another sound for baby to hear, find, or crawl to. Leave the sound makers out for a few days and try the activity each day. See if baby changes in his/her ability to find

the new sounds.

Smelling Activity

Baby Can: Smell things

Fill small plastic bottles (with holes punched in the lid) with good-smelling spices or potpourri. Tape the lid so it will not come off. Place these in different parts of the room for baby to smell. Also, stick cloves into an orange and hang it out of reach in the diapering area. Hang a potpourri bag over the toy shelves. When baby is in these different places, talk about what he/she smells.

Books for touching

Baby Can: Turn pages in a hard-page book

Cover six-inch square pieces of cardboard with different-textured fabrics. Punch two holes along one edge of each piece and tie them all together to make a book. Let baby play with the book as you talk about what he/she is touching. Make some shapes out of contrasting fabric and sew them on top of a few pages for baby to feel.

Activities for Young Toddlers (12 Months to 18 Months)

Naming Others

Young Toddlers Can: Name a few familiar people

Help the toddler learn the names of him/her friends. Hold one child on your lap while a friend or two watch. Use a clean cloth, such as a diaper or scarf, to hide the child on your lap from others. Ask the child, "Where's Claire?" Pull the cloth away and look happily surprised. "Here's Claire." Let another child sit on your lap to hide. Do the same hiding activity again.

A Book from Greeting Cards

Young Toddlers Can: Turn two to three pages at a time

Use old greeting cards to make a pretty picture book. Glue the back of each card to a large piece of sturdy cardboard so that the cards can still be opened. Tie the cardboard pages together with yarn for ones that are textured or have glitter on them. Put the book in the book corner. Talk with the toddler about the pictures. Don't worry if the card books become torn after a lot of use. Just replace the old card books with new ones.

A Toddler Size Picture

Young Toddlers Can: Show one body part

Make a life-size outline picture of a toddler on a big piece of paper. Tape the picture to a wall where the toddler can reach. As the toddler watches, fill in the eyes, nose, mouth, hair, and other body parts with a crayon or marker. As you draw each part, see if the toddler can show you where that same part is on his/her own body. Leave the picture up to talk about again.

Things I Know Book

Young Toddlers Can: Look at and feel familiar things

For each child, make a book of favorite and familiar things. Ask parents for scraps of the child's old blanket or pajamas, a sock or mitten that's too small, a scrap of Mom's old dress, or other things that are rather flat and can be glued to cardboard pages. Make a book out of these things just for the child. Add photos or pictures of his/her family or friends. Talk about the book as the child looks at and feels each page.

Surprise Board

Young Toddlers Can: Play peek-a-boo

Make a surprise board. Directions are given below. Cut out or draw pictures of things the child knows. Make sets of pictures of foods, animals, clothes, and toys. Put one set of pictures on the board. Direct the toddler's attention to the pictures. Talk about what the child sees.

Directions for Surprise Board:
1. Cut out four or more eight-inch squares of pretty fabric.
2. Sew one edge of each square onto a yard of fabric so that the squares become flaps that hang down.
3. Nail or staple the fabric to a wall, the back of a bookcase, or a closet door. Cover tacks or staples with strong tape so that children will not pull them out.
4. Use masking tape to hang pictures behind each of the fabric flaps. Draw pictures or cut them out from magazines, old children's books, catalogs, or coloring books.
5. Show children how to lift fabric squares to see the picture underneath.
6. Change the pictures often.

Bug Jar

Young Toddlers Can: Name some familiar things

Collect three or four small bugs and put them in a clear plastic jar with some grass or twigs. Punch a few holes in the lid so that the bugs can breathe. Put the jar out on a table or shelf where

the toddler can watch the bugs move. Do not use glass jars for safety reasons.

Basketball drop

Young Toddlers Can: Throw a ball

Cut the lid off a large diaper box. Put it in the middle of the floor along with a few balls or bean bags. Show the toddler how to drop or toss a ball into the box. When all the balls have been thrown, ask the young toddler to help you find them. Then dump them out and play again.

Train Pull

Young Toddlers Can: Walk and pull a toy

Cut the front off of a few large empty soap boxes. Tie them together with heavy string to make a train. Give the young toddler blocks or toys to fill his/her boxes anyway he/she wants. Then let him/her pull them around like a train.

Textured Scribble

Young Toddlers Can: Scribble

Lay a few flat objects, such as a leaf, a piece of plastic net, a scrap of fabric, sandpaper, or a sprinkle of salt or sand on a table. Tape a large sheet of newsprint over the flat objects so that none of them show. Give the toddler crayons to scribble on the paper. Talk about what he/she feels as he/she draws.

Poking Around

Young Toddlers Can: Poke with index finger

Cut a few pieces of sturdy cardboard into five-inch squares. Glue different-textured fabrics onto each piece to completely cover them. Cut a hole the size of a large coin in the middle of each square for the child to poke his finger. Punch two holes along one edge of each page and tie the pages together with yarn or string to make a poking book. Give the book to the toddler to feel and poke freely.

Squeeze Toys

Young Toddlers Can: Use both hands together

Put a few sponges or sponge toys in a dishpan of water. As the toddler plays, show him/her how he/she can squeeze a sponge and make the water drip. Then help him/her to put the sponge back in the water, fill it up, and squeeze again.

Feed the Clown

Young Toddlers Can: Put three or more objects into a container

Draw a bright clown face on the cover of a shoe box. Cut out the clown's big, open smile. Make several circles out of sturdy cardboard. Show the toddler how to feed "cookies" to the clown by dropping the cardboard circles into the clown's mouth. Count each "cookie" as it goes in. Help the child get the "cookies" out of the box to use again until he can do it by himself. Cut out other food shapes from cardboard, such as apples, carrots, or bread, for the toddler to feed the clown.

Book of Colors

Young Toddlers Can: Begin to be aware of colors

Find pictures of familiar objects that are all the same color. Glue them onto sturdy cardboard squares and cover with clear contact paper. Tie the pages together to make a color book. Look at the book with the toddler and talk about the color and the objects you see.

Shape Box

Young Toddlers Can: Put objects in a box

Cut a small hole and a large hole in the lid of a sturdy shoe box. Give the toddler blocks, beads, or other small toys to push through the holes. Talk about what you are doing. Don't worry if the child tends to put even the little things in the big hole. The idea is just to find a hold that fits the toy.

Jello Circles

Young Toddlers Can: Eat finger food and follow simple directions

Make jello in a pan with low edges. After the jello is set, let each child cut out a few jello circles with a round cookie cutter. Usa a spatula to serve the jello circles with round crackers. Talk about the shape and the color of the jello with the children. Try many other colors of jello or other shapes of cookie cutters.

Drawings with Colored Chalk

Young Toddlers Can: Scribble and understand many words and directions

Tape a piece of white paper to a table, wall, or easel. Put brightly colored nontoxic chalk near the paper where the toddler

can reach it. Let the child scribble with the chalk. The chalk colors will be brighter if you dampen the paper with a wet sponge before beginning. Try using wet starch to dampen the paper because then the chalk won't rub off. Leave the chalk and a chalkboard out where the toddlers can easily use them when they like.

Towers of Salt Boxes

Young Toddlers Can: Roll or stack objects

Cover empty salt containers with brightly colored cloth or paper. Let the children try to stack them or roll them across the floor. Fill some of the containers with macaroni, bells, sand, or other interesting objects that change the weight or sound of the container. Make sure these containers are sealed tightly so that they cannot be opened.

Bristle Blocks

Young Toddlers Can: Use two hands together

Put a set of Bristle Blocks in a dishpan on a low shelf. Show the children where it is, and encourage them to play with the Bristle Blocks in their own way. The children may just want to carry them around. Help them to stack, pull apart, and feel the blocks as they play. Remind the toddlers to put the blocks back in the dishpan when they are finished.

Mirror Game

Young Toddlers Can: Know self in a mirror

Provide a long unbreakable mirror in the dress-up area. Help the toddler put on a few dress-up clothes, and show the child his/her reflection as she plays. Talk about what he/she is wearing, how he/she looks, what he/she is playing with, or what he/she is doing. As you are looking in the mirror, imitate each other's movements, facial expressions, and actions.

Jack-in-the-Box

Young Toddlers Can: Imitate a few actions

Have the toddler sit in a big cardboard box as you sing "Pop Goes the Weasel". When you sing the word "pop", hold the toddler's hands and help him/her jump up. If the child has a hard time jumping, throw your arms up high and see if he/she will imitate the action. Laugh with the toddler as he/she moves in his/her own way.

Musical Pull

Young Toddlers Can: Pull a toy on a string

Tie a long, sturdy string to each of several musical toys. Put these toys in the play area for the toddler to pull around the room. Choose toys that make sounds as they move, such as wrist bells, shakers, and musical pull toys. Supervise children with string toys, so that they do not get tangled in the string.

Activities for Older Toddlers (18 Months to 24 Months)

Naming Game

Older Toddlers Can: Know the names of a few people

Have some toddlers sit in a little circle with you. Look at one child and describe him/her. Point to the child if needed. Give the child or his/her friends a chance to say the child's name. If they can't, then you can. Repeat for all children. Let children come and go from the circle as they wish.

Whose Cubbie is This?

Older Toddlers Can: Know self in a photo

Put a photo of the child on the cubbie where he/she keeps his/her things. You can make cubbies out of dishpans or sturdy boxes and place them where the child can reach. Use clear contact paper to hold the photo on the cubbie. Help the child find his/her own cubbie by looking at and talking about the photos.

Feeling Words

Older Toddlers Can: Show many emotions (fear, anger, joy, etc.)

As the child shows fear, anger, joy, or other feelings, give words to what the child feels. Later, when the child is older, he/she will be able to use these words himself/herself.

Carry On

Older Toddlers Can: Carry a large toy while walking

Provide at least one large soft doll or stuffed animal for each child in your room. Say to the toddlers, "We are going to take the dolls for a walk. Come on. Let's go pick them up!" When each child has a doll he or she can carry, begin your short walk. Have the children show their dolls all the fun things you see. Give the toddlers words for what they are doing.

Exercise with the Animals

Older Toddlers Can: Move arms and legs at the same time

Gather the toddlers who wish to play for an animal exercise class. Sing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." As you sing each animal's name, move your body the same way the animal would move.

*snake-wiggle whole body
*elephant-swing arms together for a trunk
*frog-hop
*duck-squat or waddle
*giraffe-tiptoe with stretched neck
*monkey-jump up and down
*chicken-flap arms and bob head

Pour and Fill

Older Toddlers Can: Use both hands together

Fill a dishpan with clean, dry rice or beans. In the dishpan put spoons, small pitchers, plastic bottles, and a few small bowls. Show the child how he/she can pour the beans into the bottles and bowls. Then let him/her play in the dishpan in his/her own special way. Put the dishpans in a child's empty wading pool if you worry about the mess.

Shaving Cream Finger Paint

Older Toddlers Can: Scribble

Give each child a big squirt of shaving cream in his/her own paper cup. Have him/her scoop it out and spread it on a tray or tabletop. Show the toddler how to make lines or dots with his/her fingers and big marks with his/her whole hand. Then let him/her paint freely in his/her own way.

Toy Book Activity Boxes

Older Toddlers Can: Enjoy short picture books

Make a toy book activity box. Choose a very short picture book and one or more toys or other objects belonging with that book. For example, if you have a book about cars, put some little toy cars in the box with the book. As you tell the story, show the toy cars to the toddler. Later, let the toddler play with the cars in his/her own way. Make many other toy book activity boxes to use with the children.

Favorite Fingerplays

Older Toddlers Can: Enjoy fingerplays and songs

Choose one of the three fingerplays listed below. Hold up the appropriate number of fingers for each fingerplay (five fingers for five pumpkins, three fingers for three kittens, and ten fingers for

ten Indians).

FIVE LITTLE PUMPKINS

Hold up a finger for each pumpkin, and hide your hands behind your back in the end.

"Five little pumpkins sitting on a gate.
"The first one said, "Oh my, it's getting late."
"The second one said, "There are witches in the air."
"The third one said, "But we don't care."
"The fourth one said, "Let's have some fun".
"The fifth one said, "Let's run, run, run."
"Whoooo," went the wind, and out went the lights.
"And the five little pumpkins rolled out of sight."

THREE LITTLE KITTENS

Sing the song "Three Little Kittens" to the toddlers. Hold up three fingers whenever you say the word "three."

"The three little kittens, they lost their mittens,
"And they began to cry.
"Oh mother dear, see here, see here,
"Our mittens we have lost.
"What! Lost your mittens, you naughty kittens.
"Then you shall have no pie."
"Meow, Meow, we shall have no pie."

THIS LITTLE PIGGY

When the toddler has her shoes and socks off, count her toes as you playfully touch each one. Say the rhyme "This Little Piggy" with these small changes:

Piggy number one went to market.
Piggy number two stayed home.
Piggy number three had roast beef.
Piggy number four had none.
And Piggy number five cried, "Wee, wee, wee,"
All the way home.

Peppermint Water Play

Older Toddler Can: Enjoy water play

Pour some peppermint extract into water in a dishpan. Add cups, spoons, and funnels, and let the child play. Talk about how the water smells. A towel under the dishpan will help with spills. Also try orange or lemon extract or juice.

Shoe Sizes

Older Toddlers Can: Match objects

Mix up several pairs of shoes into one pile. Make sure you have shoes of very different sizes, shapes, and colors (red children's sneakers, black high heels, and large tan moccasins). Play a matching game as you and the child try on each shoe to find those that go together.

Art with Licking and Sticking

Older Toddlers Can: Use both hands in front of the body

Collect stamps that come free in the mail (Christmas seals or magazines and record advertisement stamps). Show the child how to lick and stick the stamps onto a small piece of paper. Let him/her stick the stamps where and how he/she likes. Don't worry if he/she licks all the glue off and the stamps don't stick as long as he/she is having fun.

Block Drop

Older Toddlers Can: Follow simple directions - Drop a ball into a box

Have the toddler stand beside a dishpan or bucket. Give him/her some blocks, one at a time, to drop into the bucket. To add variety to this activity, take the bucket outside and add water so that the blocks will splash, put a target or picture in the bucket to hit, or have another small toy in the bucket to knock over.

Three Little Kittens

Older Toddlers Can: Help get dressed - Listen to a short story

Read the story The Three Little Kittens. Put out several sets of mittens in the dress-up area and help the children put them on. Pretend to be the little kittens who lost their mittens. Read other short, simple stories, and allow toddlers to dramatize them.

Musical Scribbling

Older Toddlers Can: Scribble - Listen to music

Have crayons and paper ready for the toddler to use. If he/she can't hold his/her paper down while scribbling, tape it to the table. Play music for the child to listen to as he/she scribbles. Try fast music one time and soft, slow music another time. See if the music makes a difference in the way the toddler scribbles.

Ring Around the Animal

Older Toddlers Can: Fall by sitting down - Walk on own

Put a favorite stuffed animal or toy in the middle of the floor. Bring the toddlers into a circle around it. As you walk around the animal, sing "Ring Around the Rosie." Put the toy animal's name in the song in place of the word "Rosie." Laugh with the children as you "all fall down." Then jump back up and sing the song again.

Ring around the dolly,
A pocketful of posies,
Ashes, ashes,
We all fall down.